CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. Thanu Pillai.—I have simply to say a word about this Bill. In the Criminal Procedure Code (Act V of 1898) recently passed by the Government of India, there are several alterations made which we may adopt with advantage. What these alterations are, have not been fully noted down and circulated. This will be done in a very short time. I would therefore move that the consideration of the Bill be deferred to another meeting.

President.—This Bill has to be pushed on, so that it may be passed soon and come into force on the 1st Makarom 1074, simultaneously with the Penal Code. It would be well to fix an early date for the consideration of the Bill by the Council, which would suit the convenience of the members.

It was resolved that an extraordinary meeting be convened for the purpose, on Thursday the 16th June, at 12 noon.

STAMP REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. Thanu Pillai.—I had intended to move to-day for the consideration and, if possible, final reading of this Bill. But for reasons which I shall presently explain, I have thought it necessary to take another course. Our Stamp Regulation (I of 1059) is an adaptation of the British Act, I of 1879. Subsequent to that Act, there have been several amendments in British India, which have not yet been adopted by us. In the Bill which I introduced, I embodied such amendments as I thought might be adopted with advantage. But since introducing my Bill, I find the Stamp law is undergoing thorough revision in British India. A Bill to amend and consolidate the Stamp law is now before the Viceroy's Council, and it has now reached an advanced stage. The Select Committee has already reported on the Bill, and from the report of the Committee and the speech of Sir James Westland before the Council in presenting the report, I find that we could, with advantage, take many valuable suggestions from that measure. There are two courses open to us—either to adopt the suggestions in the shape of amendments to the present Bill, or to re-draft the whole Stamp Regulation. The former course seems to me to be the less satisfactory of the two. In the first place, the amendments will be larger in number than the original Bill itself. Secondly, the existence of two Regulations in the same subject—the original Regulation and an amendment Regulation which contains modifications of many of the provisions of the former—will be a source of great practical inconvenience. The Stamp law is one which enters so largely into the business transactions of every day life, that too much pains cannot be taken to make its provisions clear and intelligible. As it is, its provisions are not clearly understood and, perhaps, not clearly understandable. I find also a serious defect in our present Regulation. The Schedule is not alphabetically arranged and in consequence, one has to wade through the whole Schedule to find out the duty on a particular class of instruments. I think it is very necessary to recast the Schedule. I beg, therefore, to move that I be permitted to withdraw the Bill now before the Council, and to introduce a fresh Bill to consolidate and amend the existing law.

Mr. Prince.—I second the proposal.

Permission was accordingly granted.

NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS BILL.

Mr. Kuruvila.—In accordance with the permission granted on the 20th November last, I beg to introduce the "Negotiable Instruments Bill."

As regards the necessity for special legislation on the subject and as to the general lines on which the Regulation should be framed, I had referred at some length when I sought the permission of the Council for introducing the Bill. In addition to the facts then adduced, I believe, it would not be out of place here to mention that it is at the instance of the most influential exponents of mercantile opinion that I have been prompted to undertake the responsibility of recommending such positive intervention of the legislature in mercantile matters. I consider that

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